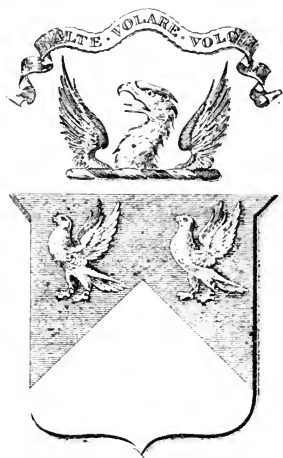


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# SPEECH

OF

CAPTAIN WILLIAM EASTWICK,

ON THE CASE OF THE

AMEERS OF SINDE,

*At a Special Court,*

HELD AT THE INDIA HOUSE,

ON FRIDAY, 26th JANUARY, 1844.

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LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1844.



## SPEECH,

§c. §c.

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MR. CHAIRMAN,

I rise to second the motion. It is with great diffidence I venture to trespass upon the attention of this Court. I am not in the habit of addressing public assemblies, and I feel the difficulty I shall have in expressing my sentiments ; I feel also, what is of far greater consequence, how perfectly incapable I am of doing justice to the cause I have undertaken. I can assure the Court the effort is a very painful one to me. But holding, as I do, such strong opinions on the impolicy and injustice of our late proceedings in Sindé, and having had an especial interest in marking the progress of our relations with the native States on the banks of the Indus, I deem it my imperative duty, as a friend to the natives of India, as an enemy to oppression, and as a Christian, to protest most solemnly against those proceedings, and to lend my humble aid to any attempt that may be made, to draw the attention of this Court, and the public at large, to a line of policy, so repugnant to my notions of justice, and, in my opinion, so discreditable to the British name. In the discussion of this question, in the discharge of what I conceive to be a public duty, I should

wish to avoid every expression that might tend to excite angry feelings; I should wish especially to keep clear of that party spirit, which, losing sight of fixed and immutable principles, looks only to criminate persons; at the same time I should wish to speak unreservedly, and state the conclusions I have come to, derived from personal experience, and from a careful and attentive perusal of the documents recently laid before the Proprietors.

After the able and eloquent address of my Honorable Friend, it will not be necessary for me to occupy the time of the Court by entering minutely into the whole case. It will be sufficient if I state my reasons for giving him my support, and at the same time advert to any particular points, that may appear to me not to have been sufficiently noticed. Agreeing as I do, generally, in the observations that have fallen from my Honorable Friend, and in the Resolutions proposed, recognizing most fully and cordially the necessity of bringing this question before the Court, in order that the facts may be given to the public in a tangible and authentic form, there are yet marked points of difference in our view of the case, and to some of these I will take the liberty of alluding. We differ especially in our view of the circumstances, which led to the treaty entered into by the British Government with the Sindh State on the 20th April, 1838, and we differ also in our view of the policy rendered imperative by the conduct of the Ameers immediately subse-



quent to that treaty. With the permission of the Court I will take a brief review of the events of this period. The Papers before the Proprietors commence earlier, but it will not be necessary to do more than allude to the treaties of 1809, 1820, 1832, and 1834. The last, a commercial treaty with Meer Morad Ali Khan, the sole surviving brother of the founder of the Talpoor dynasty. We have then, that is in 1834, the British and Sindian Governments on terms of amicable relation, and it will be my endeavour to prove that overtures to a closer alliance were made by the British Government, with a view to preserve the Sindh State from a great and impending danger, the danger of Sikh aggression, at the same time looking to the strengthening our political relations on the Indus, and the throwing open that river to the commercial world.

The Ameers themselves sought the protection of the British Government, and were anxious and willing to form a new treaty, based upon mutual advantage. With reference to their subsequent conduct, this is an important point to bear in mind.

It is well known that the aggressions of Runjeet Sing on all the neighbouring States, except those under British protection, were unceasing. Year after year he had seized portions of territory bordering on Sindh, and in 1836 by making a demand on the Ameers for twelve lacs of rupees, by taking possession of one of their fortresses, and advancing

a claim to Shikarpore, he shewed too plainly his desire of fastening a quarrel on the Ameers, which could only end in the subjugation of their country. His propositions to Lord William Bentinck at the meeting at Roopur in 1831, and his conversations with Sir Alexander Burnes, in 1832, prove that he had long entertained the project of annexing Sind to his dominions; and no one, I imagine, acquainted with the relative power of the two States will dispute his being able to do so, if the Ameers had been left to themselves. But, Sir, the British Government interfered, and hence the Treaty of the 20th of April, 1838. A reference to the printed official papers of 1836, and 1837, will shew that the British Government had no wish to force the connexion, that "Noor Mahomed himself invited the British Representative," and not only agreed to all the stipulations, but offered to cede a portion of Shikarpore to pay the expenses, and expressed his hope that a British force might be sent to Sind to protect him from Sikh aggression, and strengthen his rule against internal enemies.

It would be useless to take up the time of the Court by reading numerous extracts. But let Noor Mahomed speak for himself in an interview with Sir Henry Pottinger, recorded in the 38th paragraph of the letter of December the 10th, 1836.

It must be recollected that at this period, Noor Mahomed was the acknowledged head of the Sind State, and spoke the collective voice of the Go-

vernment. Sir H. Pottinger writes, "Noor Mahomed told me he had agreed to all I had proposed, and would religiously abide by his stipulations, that should it be found necessary to send an army to Sinde he would pay whatever portion of expense the Governor-General chose to name ;" (a little further on we find) "that he (Noor Mahomed) felt assured our interposition and power would soon tranquillize the countries to the northward, that it would be an act of grace, that would redound to the fame of the Governor-General, and bring blessings on his administration."

Surely no language can be more clear and unequivocal. Had Noor Mahomed acted up to these professions, had he fulfilled, as he was bound to do, the stipulations of this Treaty, he might have sat down under the protection of British power, secure from foreign and domestic enemies. It is quite evident, from the whole tenor of the instructions of the then Governor-General, that at that period there was no desire of territorial aggrandizement, no sinister designs against the Sinde State. But, by the characteristic delay of Asiatics, these negotiations were protracted from 1836 to 1838. Noor Mahomed was relieved from the impending danger of Sikh aggression, and was in no hurry to ratify his engagements. In the meantime, the aspect of political affairs on the north-western frontier had changed ; a combination of Mussulman powers, hostile to British interests, had been entered

into, and a counter-movement was deemed imperative, to arrest the course of intrigue, and provide for the security of the British Empire in India. I am not called upon to discuss the wisdom of the measures adopted, I only state the fact, as evincing the belief of those intrusted with the responsibility of governing India, that a great crisis had arrived.

I think no one will dispute, that believing in such a crisis, believing in the paramount necessity of the proposed counter-movement, it was the duty of the Governor-General to look to all the subordinate arrangements requisite to ensure the success of that movement. It was to be expected also, of all States in amicable relation with the British Government, that they should afford their aid in such a crisis. The Rao of Kutch, the Ameer of Bahawulpore, and other Chieftains, came forward to the utmost extent of their ability. But, Sir, even if active co-operation be deemed too much to expect of Native States, surely we had a right to insist, that those in friendly relations with us, should at all events remain passive, and not choose this crisis to open a correspondence with the hostile powers, to profess allegiance to the head of the hostile combination, thus throwing their weight into the scale against us, and encouraging the advance of our enemies by the belief, that they would be received with open arms even by States bound to us by treaties. But to invite our enemies, was not the only indication of the hostile feelings of a Government, for whose

preservation we had so recently interfered, and who had expressed so deep a sense of the obligation. Every obstacle was thrown in the way of the advance of the British army, letters were written forbidding their subjects to assist us. They refused to fulfil the engagements of the treaty they had just concluded. Our ally Shah Shuja was menaced and insulted, the British representative was treated with the grossest indignity and even threatened with assassination ; his assistant, the bearer of a treaty, was driven from their capital ; our stores of grain were plundered, and every step taken, short of actual hostilities, to obstruct and counteract the objects of the British Government.

In confirmation of the intrigue with Persia, I beg to direct the attention of the Court to letter No. 10, of the Resident in Sinde, dated August 13th, 1838. We there find that when the ratified treaty of the 20th April, 1838, reached Hyderabad, the Ameers were on the point of despatching letters to the King of Persia, that Meer Sobdar immediately withdrew from his share in the transaction, stating that " British friendship was sufficient for him." Nothing can mark the character of this measure more strongly, and from the concluding paragraph of the same despatch it is quite clear, that the Ameers were aware that the powers to the north-west, had assumed an attitude of hostility towards the British Government.

At the next page we find the letter to the King

of Persia. There can be no doubt of the authenticity of this letter. Noor Mahomed admits the fact of writing, and a copy was obtained from the very man who wrote it; and considering, as I said before, that the King of Persia was at the head of a hostile combination against us, but one construction can be placed upon such a proceeding, but we do not require the evidence of the letter. Noor Mahomed openly threatens to invite the King of Persia to his aid, having at this very moment in his palace, an emissary from the Persian camp, said to be related to the royal family of Persia. Nor is this the only proof of his hostile disposition, he writes to the Khyrpore Ameers to deter them from befriending us, and says that he is ready for peace or war.

Sir, with such unequivocal proofs of the hostile feeling of the Ameers, it appears to me, but one course was open to the Governor-General;—to impose such conditions on these Princes, as would secure British interests from present injury, and afford a reasonable prospect of future tranquillity. Hence the treaty of the 11th March, 1839. Up to this period Sinde was tributary to Cabul; but henceforth it was released from all claims for tribute, and guaranteed from foreign aggression on the fulfilment of certain conditions. Objections have been made to many points of this treaty as pressing too hard upon the Ameers; but that they were not greatly dissatisfied may be judged by the results.

The tone of hostility was dropped, the line of demarcation between the two states was broken down, and even the Belooche chieftains bore witness to our moderation and good faith. I will take the liberty of quoting a few passages from Sir Henry Pottinger's despatch of 7th March, 1839. Speaking of Meer Noor Mahomed, Sir Henry Pottinger writes: "The tone of his Highness's conversation was most friendly and becoming; he assured me he had seen his mistake in his demeanor towards the British Government, that he trusted his future conduct would prove the faithfulness with which he unequivocally professed his submission to the Governor-General. He had now cause to comprehend our power, as well as our good faith and forbearance." In another paragraph, we find that "the Belooche chiefs candidly allowed that our procedure has been guided by the strictest adherence to our good faith." Sir, if we turn to Major Outram's affecting narrative of the closing scene of Noor Mahomed's life, contained in his despatch of 6th December, 1840, when the dying Prince could have no motives for concealing or misrepresenting his sentiments, it is quite clear that that Chieftain was sensible of his former folly, and acknowledged the benefits of the British alliance. "My friendship for the British is known to God, my conscience is clear before God," are the last solemn asseverations of the dying Ameer. And Major Outram writes, "His Highness, hailing me as his brother,

put his arms round me, and held me in his embrace a few minutes, until I laid him quietly down. So feeble and emaciated had the Ameer become, that this exertion quite exhausted him, and it was some minutes afterwards before he could speak, when beckoning his brother Meer Nusseer Khan, and youngest son Meer Houssein Ali to the bedside, he then took a hand of each, and placed them in mine, saying, ‘You are their Father, and Brother, you will protect them.’” Will the people of England believe that this unhappy boy, Houssein Ali, thus confided to the fostering care of the British Government, has been dethroned, exiled, imprisoned, and plundered of his private property, without even a charge being brought against him? All that we find is, that when his subordinate officers are accused of a breach of treaty, he immediately takes measures to prevent a recurrence of their misconduct.

I will add one more reference; it is to Meer Nusseer Khan’s letter to Sir Charles Napier in 1842. It is a remarkable passage, and completely confirms the view I have taken of the whole of these transactions. Both Meer Noor Mahomed and Meer Nusseer Khan, have expressed the same sentiments in my private interviews with them. Meer Nusseer writes: “The British Government is aware that we were once the independent sovereigns of this country; and were on a footing of friendship with the English. When Sir A. Burnes requested permission to travel through our dominions, the late Meer Morad Ali



Khan refused his consent, but the indulgence was at length granted at my intercession, as I hoped to obtain a return for the favour some day or other. Subsequently I and Meer Noor Mahomed Khan saw the advantage of seeking the protection of the wisest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth, *and therefore urged Sir Henry Pottinger, during two whole years, to come into the country,* after which, we finally succeeded in introducing a British force; our sole object in all this, was to secure to ourselves peace and quiet, and in furtherance of it we cheerfully gave up money for the construction of cantonments, and even consented to the payment of tribute.—We were then perfectly happy and contented.”

Sir, this is the construction put upon these events by the party principally concerned. What better evidence can be obtained ?

In my mind it sufficiently vindicates the British Government from the charge of forcing their alliance on the Ameers in 1838. It is clear these Princes, following out the dictates of their own judgment, sought to connect themselves with a stronger power, as a means of self-preservation. Partly to obtain a better bargain, and to save the pride of their more ignorant retainers, and partly owing to the unsettled state of political affairs to the north-west, and to their own suspicious dispositions, they, unfortunately for themselves, adopted the tortuous and insincere course, which led to the treaty of 1839.

After that treaty was concluded, their rule depended upon British support, and a new era commenced in Sinde. It is most unfair to confound the two periods, and to bring forward in defence of the late proceedings against the Ameers, their conduct previous to the treaty of the 11th March 1839.

I could add much more on this part of the case, there are many points that require elucidation, but I will not trespass on the time of the Court. I will only make one more remark, that whatever the opinion of Lord Auckland's policy, it can afford no ground of justification for Lord Ellenborough's harsh measures. If Lord Auckland behaved ill towards the Ameers, surely that was no reason why Lord Ellenborough should behave worse; on the contrary, it was a reason for treating these unhappy princes with greater consideration.

During the three years that succeeded the ratification of the treaty of 1839, all the authorities unite in praising the conduct of the Sinde chieftains. Throughout that eventful period which was characterized by disasters to our arms unparalleled in our Indian annals, the Ameers remained faithful to their engagements; at a season, when, if they had nourished any hostile designs, they might have cut off all support of our troops to the north-west, and placed in jeopardy the very existence of the British force in Candahar.

Captain Postans, who then held responsible employment in Upper Sinde, bears unequivocal testi-

mony to their good faith, and to the ameliorated state of the country. He writes : " A most satisfactory state of tranquillity pervaded the country. Our steamers were allowed to navigate the river, not only unimpeded, but with every assistance." Again : " During the violence of the Brahoes, at Kelat, large bodies of our troops were pushed through the Sindhian territories in every direction, without the slightest interruption on the part of the Ameers ; who, on the contrary, rendered us all the cordial assistance in their power, by furnishing guides and supplies. Had the conduct of these Chiefs been otherwise, our interests would have suffered severely, but in justice to them it must be recorded, that they fully made up, on this occasion, for their former hollow professions and want of faith, by a cordial co-operation." I could quote also, if time permitted, numerous passages from the Blue Book to prove the good conduct of the Ameers ; and I speak also from personal experience. One would have imagined that such conduct, during a most critical state of affairs, would have earned the Ameers some consideration ; one would have imagined that such real services would have weighed something in the balance against alleged intrigues. But, Sir, the curse of India is the constant succession of rulers, measures adopted by one Governor-General, are overturned by the next. Services rendered under one administration, are forgotten or overlooked by the succeeding one. Such was the

state of Sind during the years 1839, 1840, and 1841 ; and it will be as well here to take a review of the political question, whether it was more desirable that that country should remain under its former rulers, or be subjected to our direct control.

Sir, it is my decided opinion that the annexation of Sind to our already over-grown Eastern empire is a great error, politically and financially. By the treaty of 1839, we gained every object we could desire. We prevented Sind from falling into the hands of any power hostile to British interests ; we obtained the right of locating troops in any position we might deem most eligible ; we opened the Indus to the commercial world. By our command of steam, if an emergency should occur, we could pour into the country, at the shortest warning, any amount of military stores, and any number of troops ; and having secured the good offices of the chiefs by a firm but conciliatory line of conduct, we could confidently reckon on all the resources of their territories being placed at our disposal, as was proved during the Brahoi and Affghan operations. Having withdrawn from the countries beyond the Indus, in course of time we might have so reduced the number of our troops in Sind that they would have proved no burden to the finances of India, while, at the same time, our political relations and responsibilities would have been contracted to a narrower sphere, an object of paramount importance, in the opinion of

those who have paid attention to this subject. How stands the case at present? By an act of gross oppression we have become the sovereigns of Sinde, and on us devolves all the responsibility of governing the country, a country inhabited by wild and warlike tribes, who have little to lose, and whose motto is, like that of the Affghans, "We are content with discord, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master." As in Affghanistan, we must maintain our rule by our cannon and bayonets. It is true that we have not the same difficulties to contend against. We are nearer our communications, and Sinde presents no natural obstacles to the march of armies. There will be no fear of a scarcity of supplies. There will be no intense cold to destroy hundreds in one fatal night.

But, Sir, there is an enemy not less to be dreaded, a pestilential climate, which has already laid many a gallant soldier low, and will, I fear, continue to do so. When I was in Hyderabad, in 1839, scarcely a single individual attached to the Residency escaped fever. The regiments at Tatta were totally disorganized from the same cause. We learned a few months ago, that fifty European soldiers perished in a few days from the intense heat. I witnessed similar fatal results to a detachment of Europeans in Upper Sinde. It is said our rule will be acceptable to the people. I feel convinced this is a grievous error. Seven-tenths of the population

are bigoted Mussulmans, who hate us with an intensity not to be described. There is no country where the Syeds exercise such influence. Our coming must completely destroy their immunities and privileges. They will never cease to excite the tribes against us, and these tribes, inured from their infancy to scenes of rapine, will merge their private animosities to unite against the common foe, while the hosts of idle retainers of the late chieftains, deprived of their means of subsistence, will naturally swell the ranks of the disaffected. Amongst the dispossessed sons and brothers of the late Ameers, a leader will never be wanting. Sir, although unable to withstand a disciplined army in the field, these tribes are yet formidable for desultory mischief. To keep them in check, and collect the revenue, it will require our military force to be always on such a footing, that the burden on our finances will be enormous. We must recollect, also, that services in these distant countries is most distasteful to our native troops. Let us beware how we push too far the patience of our gallant and devoted native army.

I find Captain Postans estimates the revenues of Sind at forty lacs of rupees. Speaking from my own experience, I should consider this estimate too high; but, granting the fact, we must not forget that the greater part was always paid in kind; and, moreover, that we have made over a large portion to that arch-traitor, Ali Morad.

Now, Sir, Captain Postans also estimates the military expenditure of the current year at eighty lacs of rupees ; and I feel assured that a long period must elapse before we can much reduce our military force. These two facts require no comment.

But, Sir, it will be said, there are commercial advantages. The markets of Central Asia will be thrown open to British enterprise. Sir, our proceedings during the last few years have destroyed British influence throughout Central Asia. Where we had friends, we have now bitter enemies. By overturning the existing governments, we have let loose all the bad passions of these turbulent tribes, and caused scenes of horror and desolation fearful to contemplate. There was formerly security to the merchant, there is now none. It will be long ere things subside into their usual channel. As to compelling trade by the sword and bayonet, the idea is absurd, not to mention its wickedness.

One word on the capabilities of the river Indus. I believe them to have been much exaggerated. I believe there never was a greater fallacy than the expected advantages from what is called opening the Indus. It is a known fact that the delays in the upward navigation are so great, that merchandize is transported on camels in preference, from Kurachee to the interior ; but I am told we are to employ steam. I can only say I should be very sorry to embark my money in any such speculation. The goods must be very light, and very valuable,

the market sure, and the return rapid, to pay for the expenses of a trade carried on by steam.

But, Sir, we already possessed the free navigation of the Indus, and the power of selecting emporia for our merchandize, so that, in this respect, we have gained nothing by our late acquisition. It is merely a pretence to enlist the mercantile community on the side of injustice. Sir, these boasted commercial advantages are based upon as shallow a foundation as the prospects of peace in Sind. Sir Charles Napier may proclaim to the world, that "not another shot will be fired in Sind," and his want of local experience may excuse this, and many other of his equally confident, and equally mistaken opinions. I allude particularly to his character of the Ameers; but let the Government beware how they act upon such a belief. There may be a temporary appearance of tranquillity, but there are too many elements of discord to hope for permanent peace. There may be a lull for a season, but—

"It is the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."

And now, Sir, we have arrived at the point where we may investigate the grounds that have led to the transfer of Sind to British authority.

I am not one of those who lay claim to impartiality because I condemn the policy of my own country. I am proud of my birthright as an Englishman, but I wish to be just to all men. It is only by integrity and justice, under Providence, that



England has been raised to such an eminence of glory. I have no desire to exalt the character of the Ameers, or to create any morbid sympathy in their favour. I am not blind to their faults, or the faults of their government; but this I think it right to state, that my first impressions were far more unfavourable against them, than those I entertained on a longer residence in Sinde. The question is not one of good or bad government. Few, I imagine, here present, will contend that bad government gives another nation the right to interfere and overturn it. The question is, the breach or observance of a solemn treaty. And here I may distinctly state my opinion, that if it was proved that the Ameers of Sinde were guilty of wilful infractions of the treaty, we had a right to enforce that treaty. We had a right to impose more stringent, and strictly defined conditions, to prevent such violations for the future.

But, Sir, a careful and deliberate inquiry ought to have preceded any stringent measures. The various cases of infraction of treaty ought to have been brought to the notice of the Ameers. If no satisfactory explanation was afforded, the Ameers ought to have been distinctly warned; the innocent separated from the guilty; and then, if any one persisted in breaking his engagements, we should have been justified in exacting the penalty.

Sir, there could be no pretence here, that great national interests would be injured by a little delay.

There was no immediate nor pressing danger to the State, no possible reason why political expediency should supersede the common course of justice. Again, if the Ameers were guilty of treasonable intrigues against the British Government, they deserved to be punished. But, Sir, it was due to them, and due to ourselves, to proceed with deliberation. Charges are not crimes, proof is required. The Ameers ought to have had the opportunity of answering these charges. The treasonable letters ought to have been shewn to them. They ought not to have been condemned unheard; I will not say on *ex parte* evidence, because there was no evidence at all. Sir, I repeat, there was no political necessity to justify a departure from rules held sacred by every Englishman.

But to proceed. A perusal of the Blue Book (which, I may remark, is completely *ex parte*, the best case that can be made out for the Government. If the Ameers had a Blue Book of their own, it would tell a different tale; I could help them, from my own knowledge, to many a palliating circumstance). A perusal of the Blue Book affords a mass of assertion, and vague accounts of intrigues in various quarters, to which all who know any thing of the manner in which reports are raised in India, will attach but little weight.

Sir, the manufacture of these stories for gullible political officers is a regular trade. If such absurd rumours were listened to no native prince would be

safe. The British Government would be involved in continual warfare, until every native State was overturned. Sir, I speak advisedly on these points. As Political Agent in Upper Sind, I had repeated opportunities of testing the value of the Bazaar reports of Shikarpore. In the voluminous items of intelligence given in the Blue Book, I can recognize the names of many worthless characters ; and from a careful analysis of the whole affair, I feel persuaded that the greatest part of these informants were in the pay of Ali Morad, who fabricated these stories to effect the ruin of his elder brother, Meer Roostum. How admirably he succeeded is unhappily too well known. But, Sir, we are saved the trouble of entering upon these intrigues, as the justification of the Governor-General's measures is brought within a small compass by his own letters. It seems, however, that Major Outram attached a certain weight to these intrigues, and taking also into consideration the alleged infractions of the treaty, and the altered state of our political relations to the north-west, Major Outram proposed a revision of the treaty of 1839, relinquishing the money payments in exchange for territory ; which arrangement, he writes, might be carried into effect without much difficulty. Sir, it must be confessed, that Major Outram's language regarding these intrigues is very strong, and calculated to create an unfavourable impression against the Ameers in the mind of Lord Ellenborough. But, Sir, this is no

justification of Lord Ellenborough's harsh and arbitrary measures. Placed in the responsible situation of Governor-General of India, invested with the solemn functions of a judge, it was the duty of Lord Ellenborough to have waited calmly until the charges against the Ameers, and the evidence in support of those charges, were laid before him. He would then have seen on what foundation Major Outram's strong language was based.

Sir, we find the charges and the evidence stated at length in the two memorandums, with their accompaniments, submitted for the information of Sir Charles Napier. My honourable friend has sufficiently exposed the puerile absurdity of most of these charges. I shall come to them presently. We must first see what answer Lord Ellenborough returns to Major Outram's proposition. "He does not see any necessity for precipitate negotiations." This was on the 10th of July, 1842. In August the Governor-General writes to the Secret Committee, "That he had no intention to press on the Ameers any hasty change in their present relations." Bnt, Sir, a few days afterwards, the appointment of Sir Charles Napier takes place, and the sentiments of the Governor-General, without any apparent reason, undergo a most material alteration.

Sir, in speaking of that distinguished officer, Sir Charles Napier, whose very name is interwoven with recollections of England's glory, I should

wish to disclaim any intention of disrespect. I am not one to speak lightly of constituted authorities. I appeal to all those under whom I have served during my residence in India. I appeal to the testimonials I have received. Sir, I entertain the highest admiration of Sir Charles Napier's military talents; I appreciate his great services to his country; I believe him to be quite incapable of committing a wilful injustice.

But, Sir, as an independent man, giving an independent opinion to the best of my humble judgment, I am bound to say, that I consider his ignorance of the languages, manners, and habits of the people with whom he had to deal, his want of experience in native character and political life in India, and above all, his total want of sympathy with the unfortunate Ameers, were the main cause of the fatal result of these negotiations.

Sir, I think no one act of the present Governor-General is more to be condemned, than, on the eve of difficult and complicated negotiations, thus sweeping away all the machinery by which the intercourse between the two states had been carried on for a lengthened period. Sir, it was not only unwise, but most unjust to the Ameers, and calculated to instil into their minds the greatest distrust and suspicion. But Lord Ellenborough goes still further, he most unnecessarily, in my opinion, gives unlimited power to Sir Charles Napier, and writes that he will abide by his decisions; thereby

removing all check upon Sir Charles Napier's proceedings.

Sir, I will commence with Sir Charles Napier's first letter to the Ameers, dated September 25th, 1842. It must be remembered that in a subsequent letter of the 17th of October, he distinctly records his opinion that "only a fair pretext was wanting to coerce the Ameers." I ask any candid person to read that letter, and state whether a pretext was likely to be long wanting. I have no hesitation in avowing my conviction that if the principles expressed there were acted upon, not only every native Government in India might be subverted, but every Government on the face of the earth. I will not stop to analyse the string of assumptions on which Sir Charles Napier builds his conclusions. To overlook the wrongs inflicted on individuals, on the general principle of benefiting the masses, is no new doctrine. This was the doctrine of the French republicans; this was the doctrine of the Spanish adventurers in the new world, who marked their path with rapine and murder, and still regarded themselves as the soldiers of the church, the armed messengers of the gospel of peace. Thus we, under the specious plea of ameliorating the condition of society, and advancing civilization, are privileged to carry misery home to every hearth, and bring each independent nation under the yoke of our all-grasping rule. But, Sir, I would beg to direct attention, for one moment, to

the document appended to this letter. It professes to be an equitable exchange between tribute and territory, and the account winds up with a balance in favour of the Ameers of 33,856 rupees. Honourable Proprietors will be astonished to learn that of the 13 lacs 28,000 rupees charged against the Ameers, on which interest is calculated, upwards of eight lacs are an overcharge, and the sum of one lac of rupees annual tribute set down against the name of Meer Nusseer of Khyrpore is not due by that Prince, as an engagement from Sir A. Burnes exempted Meer Mobarick and his heirs from annual tribute, according to the Governor-General's decision, contained in a letter, dated February 8th, 1841. I would refer also to a letter dated April 21st, 1842, from Major Outram, which will explain the overcharge with respect to the seven lacs of rupees, said to be due, on account of Shah Shuja; Honourable Proprietors will then be able to test the fairness of this exchange of land for money.

But, Sir, let us turn to the causes of offence, and breach of treaty alleged against the Ameers, as put forward by Sir C. Napier, in his first letter to these Princes, dated 25th September, 1842. The first complaint is: "Your Highnesses have prohibited the inhabitants of Kurachee to settle in the Bazaar." Now, Sir, I contend the Ameers had a perfect right so to do. By the fifth article of the Treaty of the 11th March, 1839, they were absolute rulers in their respective principalities, and

the British Government was precluded from interfering with their subjects. It was never intended that our cantonments should thrive at the expense of their towns, and draw away all the inhabitants who would naturally flock to where they would be relieved from all taxes. If such were the case, how could the Ameers, as they very justly ask, realise their revenues, and pay their tribute. We first impose a tribute, we then take from these unhappy Princes the means of paying it, and then punish them for not paying. It was distinctly stated by Sir Henry Pottinger, in his instructions to me, that the cantonments were to be nothing more than the Bazaar, to which the Ameer had consented in the agreements of 1836.

The second complaint of Sir Charles Napier is, "That your Highnesses have ordered every thing landed at the Bunder, in the first instance, to be taken to the Custom House, and taxed." Here, again, I contend that their Highnesses were perfectly right, if we turn to the notification of Sir Henry Pottinger, alluded to in his letter of the 25th November, 1839. We find, "that duties will be levied on all goods landed at Kurachee, save *bonâ fide* government stores and supplies."

Now, Sir, this order of the Ameers applied to goods sold by Naomull, a merchant of Kurachee, and could have nothing to do with government stores and supplies. If any previous permission had been granted to Naomull, the Ameers had a right to



revoke it. It is quite clear to me that neither Sir Charles Napier nor the political agent understood the treaty in this limited sense. But one fact speaks clearly to Sir Henry Pottinger's version of this article. I know that he directed duties to be paid on all his own goods and supplies that came from Bombay to Kurachee. To my mind this completely justifies the Ameers.

The third complaint of Sir Charles Napier is, "That your Highnesses levy tolls on the boats belonging to the subjects of Sinde." It is my opinion that in this instance the Ameers were wrong. But the subject had been often mooted, and the Ameers had been, at one time, supported in their view by the native agent at Hyderabad. A reference to the correspondence will show that even Major Outram considered the point doubtful ; and notwithstanding the decision of the late Governor-General, so late as June 21st, 1842, I find in Major Outram's sketch of a new treaty, he inserts an Article providing for the abolition of tolls on the Indus, which, he writes in the margin, are "assumed to have been previously relinquished ;" thereby implying that a misapprehension existed, and that there were grounds for discussion. Now, this is the very point to which I am anxious to draw particular attention.

If misapprehension did exist, if there were grounds for discussion, and I think I have shewn that even the Ameers of Lower Sinde were not alto-

gether in the wrong, the Ameers of Upper Sind were decidedly right, as they had given no specific pledge on the subject. If such was the state of the case, what was the course to be pursued? Surely we were not justified in proceeding at once to the infliction of the severest penalties, by the confiscation of the territories of these Princes, and the abrogation of their rights as independent sovereigns. Sir, the weakness of the internal government in these states renders it probable that many of these complaints were owing to the misconduct of the subordinate officers of the Ameers; in many instances, probably, the complainants themselves were in fault, and trusted to the ignorance of British functionaries to escape detection. I could relate many barefaced attempts to elude the custom-house duties, by fraudulent Persian papers. But, Sir, what is the practice amongst European nations when misconstruction of the clauses of a treaty exists? Do the strongest and most powerful take the law into their own hands, and cut the Gordian knot—Napier fashion—with the sword? Sir, in the case of the Boundary dispute with America, what would have been thought of England, (granting that we had the power,) if we had not only taken forcible possession of the disputed territory, but confiscated several American towns, those most eligibly situated for our own commercial purposes, because the Americans had the audacity to raise a question on the subject? I

fear to take up the time of the Court by entering into too many details ; but while on this subject, I beg for one instant to direct attention to Sir Charles Napier's letter, of the 26th November, to Meer Roostum. One of the most unjustifiable productions I ever read.

Sir, the case is this:—a Kardar of Meer Roostum levies toll on a boat. According to Sir Charles Napier, this is an infraction of the VIIIth Article of the Treaty of the 25th November, 1838. Let us read Article VIII. It runs thus. “In order to  
 “improve, by every means possible, the growing  
 “intercourse by the river Indus, Meer Roostum  
 “Khan promises all co-operation *with the other*  
 “*powers*, in any measures which may be hereafter  
 “thought necessary for extending and facilitating  
 “the commerce and navigation of the Indus.” Now, Sir, if we refer to the commentary of Sir Alexander Burnes, who concluded this Treaty, on this very Article, we find that Meer Roostum was never given to understand that the tolls were to be relinquished ; and I would ask, is this general declaration (which in the Persian translation is probably still more general,) sufficient to entitle the British representative to denounce Meer Roostum as an enemy, if he does not consider himself bound to all the specific measures subsequently entered into with the other powers ? Major Outram, in his letter of October 14th, distinctly informs Sir Charles Napier that there was no document or record, in the

Office, pledging the Upper Sinde Ameers to any specific measures regarding the tolls on the Indus ; and until that was the case, whatever may have been written by political agents, as the result of private conversations, I think Meer Roostum was perfectly justified in refusing to resign so large a portion of his revenue. Not so Lord Ellenborough, who decides that the agreements of the Ameers of Hyderabad were to bind the Ameers of Khyrpore, forgetting that this very Treaty, of the 24th December, emancipated Khyrpore from the control of Hyderabad. Why does not Lord Ellenborough refer "to the other powers on the Indus?"—the Khan of Bahawulpore, and the Maharajah of the Seiks? Because they were still permitted to exact tolls, and it would tell against his decision. Surely Meer Roostum had every right to quote their practice in his own favour. In my opinion, Sir Charles Napier was decidedly wrong : but what is his next step? He demands that the kardar, one of Meer Roostum's subjects, shall be sent a prisoner to him, that he may determine his punishment. This is a gross infraction of the treaty, as were many other acts of the gallant General ; but Lord Ellenborough and Sir Charles Napier seem to consider, as my honourable friend very justly said, that treaties are only made to bind one party. Sir, the whole conduct of Sir Charles Napier brings to my mind very strongly a passage in Mr. Elphinstone's History of India, relating to

Aurungzebe, and the North-eastern Affghans. It runs thus—"But from the numerous small communities, and the weakness of the internal government even in the large ones, there must often have been acts of aggression by individuals which required forbearance on the part of the royal officers. As Aurungzebe was very jealous of his authority, and as he knew nothing of the structure of society among the Affghans, it is not unlikely that he suspected the chiefs of countenancing these irregularities underhand." Now, Sir, this applies exactly to Sir Charles Napier, and led to the same lamentable results, an unjust and unnecessary war.

But, Sir, the question does not depend upon these transactions. It would be unnecessary to enter so much into detail, except to shew the arbitrary and unjustifiable nature of the whole of these proceedings, and at the same time expose the untenable ground on which the charges of infraction of treaty, contained in the two memorandums, submitted to Sir Charles Napier, are founded. Sir, Lord Ellenborough himself was, no doubt, aware that misconstruction of the clause of a treaty is no ground for penal measures, and he, therefore, rests his justification on the alleged treasonable correspondence. The whole case, therefore, against the Ameers is made to depend on three distinct propositions, which we find in Sir Charles Napier's letter of the 17th of November, of which Lord Ellenborough approves. And here I would remark, that my

honourable friend has so ably dissected and rebutted the evidence in support of these charges, and has so completely exposed the injustice of depriving Sovereign Princes of their thrones and of their liberty on such questionable grounds, that I need not do more than cursorily touch upon the principal points, both to connect the subject and to bring them to the recollection of the Proprietors.

The three propositions are these—1st. Is the letter of Meer Nusseer Khan to Beeburuck Boogtie, an authentic letter, or a forgery? 2nd. Is the letter of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpore, to the Maharajah Shere Sing, an authentic letter or a forgery? 3rd. Did Futih Mahomed Ghoree, confidential agent of Meer Roostum Khan, of Khyrpore, assist in the escape of Mahomed Shureef?

Sir Charles Napier considers the authenticity of the letter from Meer Nusseer Khan to Beeburuck Boogtie, to depend entirely on the authenticity of the seal; after failing in his comparison with the seals in the office, and falling back, on this most ingenious solution of the difficulty, that the Ameer employed two seals; he obtains the cover of another on which is a similar seal, and some writing of Chothram, Meer Nusseer Khan's confidential Moon-shee, and this carries conviction to his mind; this is what he calls, "securing firm moral ground." Was there ever such a perversion of language? Sir, to any one experienced in native courts it would be ludicrous, (if such frightful consequences

were not involved,) to contemplate Sir Charles Napier, gravely sitting down to measure the seal with a pair of compasses, and on this comparison proposing to found his right to enforce measures likely to produce war. Sir, the forgery of seals in Asiatic durbars is of every day occurrence. In the records of this very book, we find that Major Outram's seal was successfully forged by one of the agents of the Hyderabad Court. In the notes of conference, the Ameer alludes to this circumstance. What does Major Outram add? "The hand writing was also ascertained to be that of one of your confidential scribes." Meer Nusseer Khan replies, "I solemnly deny that it was written by my authority. Why was not the paper shewn to me?" Sir, I as solemnly assert, that I believe Meer Nusseer Khan spoke the truth. The venality of these confidential scribes is notorious. They are paid for furnishing intelligence of the Durbar proceedings. But, Sir, it is a well known fact, that seals are not used on such occasions, letters are not even written; messages are sent by confidential agents. I find Naomull confirms my statements as to the absence of seals; and in the very letter accompanying the memorandum, dated October 20th, Lieut. Mylne writes, "I am unable to produce documentary proof in support of my assertion; of late his Highness has not often trusted the committal of his ideas to paper, but has despatched trusty messengers furnished with credentials." But, Sir, the

internal evidence of this letter is sufficient to condemn it. The events alluded to took place months previous to the alleged date; and there is one expression which in my mind stamps it as a forgery, Nusseer Khan is made to call Beeburuck Boogtie "an especial servant." Now, Sir, I speak from personal experience on this point; Beeburuck Boogtie is a petty chieftain of a tribe inhabiting the hills to the north of Shikarpore, and quite out of the influence of the Hyderabad durbar. He is nominally subject to the Khan of Kelat, but in reality independent. I question whether Nusseer Khan had ever heard his name. Surely such a trumpery affair, granting the truth of it, is not to be placed on the same footing as a correspondence with a Government. But, Sir, why was the letter not shewn to the Ameer? Is this system, of condemning unheard, to continue? *Is there to be for ever one law for Englishmen and another for the natives of India?* Sir, we proceed to the letter alleged to have been written by Meer Roostum to Shere Sing. We find that Major Outram, writing to the envoy at Lahore, states, that he obtained this letter through a party inimical to Meer Roostum, and that he has doubts of its authenticity. The envoy at Lahore, Mr. Clerk, than whom no man in India was more capable of giving a sound opinion, also doubts its authenticity. It is referred to Captain Postans, and he writes, "The seal is certainly that of Meer Roostum, under the title he em-



pleys while corresponding with the Khalsah Government, and the hand-writing is like that of several letters in my office. I should have no hesitation in considering it *a genuine production of Meer Futih Mahomed Ghoree*, and in all probability written by himself or one of his sons."

In another letter Captain Postans states, that Futih Mahomed "uses Meer Roostum's seal to his own purposes." There is not a particle of evidence, except the assertion of Lieutenant Brown, affecting Meer Roostum. But Sir Charles Napier solves the difficulty by making Meer Roostum responsible for the acts of his Minister, and Lord Ellenborough confirms this decision. Is it possible to conceive any doctrine more unjust? If it can be proved that the Minister acted under direct instructions from the Prince, if he was an accredited agent, then the Prince is answerable, surely not otherwise. What was the proper course to be pursued by the British representative? To bring the charges against the Minister; if they were proved to demand that he should be dismissed from his office, or banished the country, according to the nature of the offence. Will any man maintain that without any further inquiry, we were justified in confiscating the territory of the Ameer,—that Ameer who had evinced his devotion to us on so many critical occasions. But, Sir, the internal evidence against the authenticity of this letter is still more strong than in the case of the former one.

Lord Ellenborough incorrectly charges Meer Roostum "with endeavouring to commence a correspondence with a view to hostile proceedings against the British Government, with its most faithful and most esteemed ally and friend Maharajah Shere Sing."

But Sir, this letter is not the commencement of a correspondence, it must have been one of a series of treasonable letters, as it alludes to a treaty already concluded, and thereby compromises our most faithful and esteemed ally and friend, Maharajah Shere Sing. In the state of our relations with the Seiks, it is most improbable that such a correspondence ever took place, and Lieutenant Leckie, in his letter of the 3rd of May, officially reports, *that a man named Suckoo Mull, carried on a wholesale trade in forged letters, between the Seiks and the Ameers.* I feel convinced this letter emanated from the same workshop.

I need not enter upon the third charge, as I hold that Meer Roostum was not compromised by the acts of his Minister ; but, Sir, my honourable friend has exposed the absurdity of the charge, of compassing the escape of a state prisoner, who, in broad day, walks down to a boat, and embarks with his followers, and property, unquestioned, and unmolested.

We have now done with the grounds put forward by Lord Ellenborough, to justify the employment of a "preponderating force," in case the new treaties

were not acceptable to the Ameers. Let us turn to the treaties themselves, and here, as time presses, I will only advert to one or two points. A comparison between the treaty proposed by Major Outram, and that of Lord Ellenborough, will shew the harsh nature of the Governor-General's new conditions. There is a mistaken impression abroad, that the selfishness of the Ameers, with respect to their hunting preserves, was their chief cause of objection to these new treaties. This is quite unfounded. The real causes of the outbreak were the confiscation of the jagheers of the Belooche Chieftains, and the impolitic measures of Sir Charles Napier, in Upper Sindh; for which, however, Lord Ellenborough is responsible, as they met with his approval. A great deal of unmerited obloquy has been heaped on the Ameers, on account of these hunting preserves.

Sir Henry Pottinger, with his usual wisdom and good feeling, places this question on its proper footing, in his despatch of the 10th December, 1836. One fact, also, ought always to be borne in mind, that there were thousands of acres of waste land in Sindh, equally eligible for cultivation as the hunting preserves.

But, Sir, we find by Lord Ellenborough's treaty, that the whole of the country between Subzulkote and Rohree, was ceded in perpetuity to the Nuwab of Bahawalpore. Now, Sir, as this is contrary to all Lord Ellenborough's instructions and expressed

intentions, I conceive it must have been a mistake. Lord Ellenborough proposed to bestow on Bhawul Khan two districts formerly wrested from his father, Subzulkote and Bhoongbara, but nothing more ; he states this distinctly, in a subsequent letter of the 13th December. The districts of Subzulkote and Bhoongbara, were worth about a lac and forty thousand rupees. The districts actually ceded to Bhawul Khan, by the treaty, were valued at more than six lacs of rupees, amongst which are absorbed the perpetual jagheers of many Belooche Chieftains. Was it likely that they would submit to such wholesale plunder, because their chief had fallen under the displeasure of the Governor-General? We see here an instance of the recklessness of these proceedings. I find in another part of the Blue Book, that Sir Charles Napier was not aware that we had a ratified treaty with the principal Ameer, of the third division of Sind, Meer Shere Mahomed. He does not know that Shere Mahomed has possessions on the Indus, in fact, he knows nothing about him. It was not very probable that he could offer any suggestions in correction of the errors of the Governor-General. Truly it was the blind leading the blind. Alas ! for the poor natives of India, turned over to the tender mercies of such rulers. I need not comment on the disregard of Mussulman prejudices, evinced in the article regarding coining money. It is right to state that from a despatch of Lord Ellenborough, dated

February 9th, 1843, in answer to a representation of Sir Charles Napier, regarding the district between Bhoongbara and Rohree, there is reason to believe, had such a representation been made earlier, the Governor-General would have consented to a modification of the measure, but the mischief was already done.

And now, Sir, these treaties, such as they are, are sent to the Ameers, and these unfortunate Princes, overawed by the "preponderating force," express their willingness to accept them. It is impossible to read the letters of Meer Roostum, and Meer Nusseer Khan, without feelings of the deepest sorrow, shame, and indignation. Meanwhile occurs the episode of the succession to the Turban, into which I have not time to enter fully. Ali Morad, the most designing of the Upper Sindh Ameers, completely hoodwinks Sir Charles Napier, and succeeds in effecting the ruin of his elder brother, Meer Roostum. That old and venerable Chieftain, bewildered with the menacing and insulting letters of the British representative, and by the artful insinuations of his brother, expresses his wish to throw himself into the hands of Sir Charles Napier. Does this look like a desire to resort to force? Is this a proof of his contumacy, and hostile feeling to the British Government? What is the answer of Sir Charles Napier? He recommends Meer Roostum to seek refuge with his worst enemy, Ali Morad. A recommendation under

such circumstances, was, of course, a command. What is the result? The slightest knowledge of native Princes might have foretold. Ali Morad takes advantage of the opportunity, to practise on the fears of the helpless old man, who, by force or fraud is induced to resign the Turban, and is then persuaded to fly. The most remarkable feature of the case is, the conviction of Sir Charles Napier, that while trampling on all the dearest rights of these wild Belooches, and transferring the power of the State, from an aged and justly beloved chieftain, to one who was an object of detestation, he had hit on the only expedient for ensuring a permanently peaceful state of affairs in Upper Sinde. But he is not satisfied to await the result of his own experiment. On the 23d of December we find, that he reports, that "all the Ameers of Upper and Lower Sinde, have agreed to the terms of the proposed treaties." He has already committed one overt act of hostility, in taking possession of the territory between Subzulkote and Rohree.

In his letter of the 14th of December, he writes, "I have, therefore, told the Ameers that I shall occupy their territory in obedience to my orders." Now, Sir, he had not the shadow of a title to take forcible possession of the territory of the Ameers, until the new treaties were ratified and exchanged. But he is not yet content. He sends the Ameers orders to disperse their troops. By what right, except that of might, did he take this step? Was

there any article in the treaty that forbade the Ameers to assemble troops? After his repeated aggressions were they to trust to his forbearance? This is not sufficient, he hits upon another expedient, to drive these unhappy Princes to desperation. He marches upon Emamghur, a fort situated in the desert, belonging to Meer Mahomed Khan, to prove, as he states in his letter of December 27th, that "neither their deserts, nor their negotiations, can protect them from British troops." And Lord Ellenborough compliments him on his decision and enterprise; and, again, "entertains the hope that the new treaties will be carried into effect without bloodshed." Truly a pretty pair of pacificators!

After the exploit at Emamghur, Sir Charles, on the 22nd of January, 1843, continues his threatening march on Hyderabad. Blind to the colour these repeated aggressions must wear in the eyes of the Ameers—blind to the suspicions they were calculated to awaken—he still presses on in hostile array towards the capital. On the 8th and 9th of February, Major Outram meets the Ameers in durbar. No thinking man can read those notes of conference without the deepest humiliation. On the 12th the Ameers sign the treaty under a protest. In the meantime Sir Charles Napier had crossed the frontier. The Belooches, hearing this, flock to the capital. The wrongs of their old and venerable Chief, Meer Roostum, the invasion of their rights, and the series of unjust and impolitic

arrangements for the benefit of Ali Morad, were the chief causes of the excitement. The Ameers required some pledge of redress on these points. Major Outram could give none. He is told that the Ameers had lost all control over their Belooches. He is warned to depart, but, with the best intentions, he still remains firm at his post.

On the 15th, the third day after the treaty was signed, the Residency is attacked by the Belooche soldiery. None of the Ameers, except Meer Shadad, were present. After a gallant defence of four hours Major Outram retires. He rejoins Sir Charles Napier, who, on the 17th, attacks the Belooche army at Meeanee, and gains a decisive victory. The results are the captivity of the Ameers, and the annexation of Sinde to our Indian Empire. Thus closes the last act of this sad drama. In a military point of view, probably few achievements in India have been more brilliant; looking at it morally, a more disgraceful act never stained the history of our country. From the first step to the final scene, the same reckless injustice predominates. No distinction is made between the Ameers who were alleged to be guilty, and those who were known to be innocent. Meer Sobdar, whose whole career has been one of scrupulous fidelity, to whom Lord Ellenborough, in the very last treaty, had assigned territory as a reward for his good conduct, shares the hard fate of Meer Nusseer, and Meer Roostum; is dethroned, exiled, and imprisoned. It must not



be forgotten that each chief was perfectly independent of all the others, responsible for his own acts, and guaranteed in his possessions and rights by a separate treaty.

Sir, before I conclude, I would advert to two points, which catch the eye at the first glance; and with superficial observers, divert the attention from the glaring injustice of the previous proceedings. Lord Ellenborough has artfully brought these points prominently to notice, in his proclamation of March 5th, 1843. He writes, "The Governor-General cannot forgive a treacherous attack upon a representative of the British Government, nor can he forgive hostile aggression prepared by those who were in the act of signing a treaty."

Now, Sir, both these assertions distort the facts. The treaty was signed on the 12th, incorrectly stated by Lord Ellenborough the 14th. The attack on Major Outram took place on the 15th. In the intermediate days, Major Outram was distinctly warned, that the Ameers could not control the Belooches. They had already saved his life once, and the lives of his escort, on their return from the conference.

In 1839, I was placed in exactly the same position. Aware of the weakness of the internal Government of Sind, and the inability of the Ameers to protect me, I thought it my duty to withdraw in order to avoid collision. If I had been attacked, after having being warned, could I have called the

attack treacherous? Certainly not. Does Major Outram designate it as a treacherous act? He does not. Let him be summoned to the bar of the House of Commons, and answer for himself.

Sir, the Ameers had not the power to prevent this attack. We have no right to judge them according to our European notions of a Government. They were simply the heads of one of the principal tribes, the Talpoors, and the recognized channel of communication with foreign powers, but they had not even the jurisdiction of life and death, amongst some of the other powerful tribes,—the Lagharees for instance—they ruled through the Belooche chiefs. They could influence and persuade, but they could not restrain, nor enforce obedience, when opposed to Belooche prejudices. Captain Postans states, and I can confirm the statement, that the meanest Belooche will, at times, unhesitatingly beard the Ameers in public Durbar.

Sir, I feel convinced that the Ameers were not only not favourable to this attack, but exerted all their influence to prevent it, otherwise Major Outram must have been crushed. Will any man assert that the same troops who maintained such a desperate struggle at Meeanee, against Sir Charles Napier's whole army, could not have destroyed a detachment of one hundred men?

And now, Sir, let us turn to the charge of "hostile aggression prepared by those who were in the act of signing a treaty." Sir, the whole conduct

of the Ameers shew that their preparations were strictly defensive, that they had not the least notion of aggressive measures. Lord Ellenborough himself writes on the 14th of November—"The designs of the Ameers would seem, by the intelligence transmitted, to be of *a defensive character only*." We must recollect, Sir, that this is written after the assembly of a "preponderating force," at Sukkur; after the Ameers were aware of the provisions of the new treaty, and after it had been officially reported, that the Ameers had been informed "that the English meditated treachery."

Sir, none but the most obstinately prejudiced, or the wilfully blind could accuse these unhappy Princes of a desire of hostile aggression. It is against all the evidence: it is against all probability. Is it to be believed that the Ameers would have stood our staunch friends in the day of defeat and adversity, to break with us at the moment when our armies were returning flushed with victory? Is it credible, that with the experience of our recent successes in Affghanistan, they would rush headlong into so unequal a contest. I would refer the Court to a most admirable letter of Sir Henry Pottinger, dated 20th June, 1839—It is too long to quote, but bears remarkably on this point.

Sir, the Ameers knew their inability to cope with us in the field; they depended upon our sense of justice. What does Meer Nusseer Khan write,—  
*"I know that the Kings of England never sanction*

*injustice.*" In all their letters, in every conversation they refer to the treaty of 1839. Meer Nusseer calls it a wall or bund. On signing the new treaty, they express their determination *to petition* the Governor-General.

Let us read Meer Roostum's letter to Sir Charles Napier; a more affecting document it never fell to my lot to peruse,—He writes, "God knows we have no intention of opposing the British, nor a thought of war or fighting; we have not the power. Ever since my possessions were guaranteed to me and my posterity by the British Government, under a formal treaty, I have considered myself a dependent of their's, and have thought myself secure. I have always attended to the least wish of the British Officers, and now that my territory is being taken from me, I am at a loss to find out the reason of so harsh a measure. I have committed no fault. If any is alleged against me, let me hear what it is, and I shall be prepared with an answer. I feel strong in the possession of that treaty, and I trust to the consideration of the British still. If without any fault of mine you choose to seize my territory by force, I shall not oppose you, but I shall consent to, and observe the provisions of the new treaty. *However, I am now, and shall continue to be a suitor for justice and kindly consideration at your hands.*" Sir, my very blood boils with indignation, when I contemplate the wrongs of this old and venerable chieftain. When Political Agent in Upper Sinde he

treated me as a father does a son. I have sat with him in his inmost apartments, and heard him express his satisfaction that he had secured the friendship of the British Government ; there was nothing that he would not have done to shew his devotion and good feeling : he proved it in a thousand instances : and what is his reward ? he is hurled from his throne, torn from his wife and family, and sent to die in a prison in a foreign land.

Sir, I am one of those who believe that retribution awaits the guilty even in this world ; and it is my solemn conviction that some great calamity will overtake this country, if such monstrous acts of injustice are sanctioned and upheld.

But, Sir, I have shewn what Meer Roostum writes : what does he do ? He offers to throw himself into the hands of the British representative : Is it possible to shew more plainly his submission and his reliance on the British Government ; his confidence in British faith, and strict observance of treaties, that confidence which has done more to raise up our wonderful empire in the East, than all the exploits of British valour ?

Sir, notwithstanding Sir Charles Napier's repeated acts of hostility, notwithstanding his threatening and aggressive march on Hyderabad, all those who know Sind, must be aware that the Ameers could have no intention of proceeding to extremities. Sir, if they had meditated hostilities, they would have sent away their wives and families :

they would have concealed their treasures: they would have called in all their levies, especially Meer Shere Mahomed, who was considered the bravest of their warriors, and who on the prospect of hostilities with Lord Keane's army in 1839, brought his coffin and shroud to Hyderabad. And, Sir, if conscious of guilt, they never would have surrendered themselves immediately after the battle of Meeanee. Sir, I repeat, it is only those determined to convict against all evidence; it is only those prepared to trample upon all obligations, that will pronounce judgment against the unfortunate Ameers of Sinde.

Sir, on the 4th of last April, I happened to be in the House of Commons, when a Noble Lord, an honour to his country, gave utterance to the following sentiments: I quote from memory, but the words made a deep impression upon me at the time, and found a responsive echo in my breast:—"England, (he said,) with one arm resting on the East, and the other on the West, is in too many instances trampling under foot all moral and religious obligations; if such is to be the course of our future policy, if our superiority in arts, in arms, in science, and in strength is to be turned to the injury, and not to the advantage of mankind, I would much prefer that we should shrink within the proportions of our public virtue, and descend to the limits of a third-rate power." While these words rang in my ears, I cast a rapid glance at the events, which within a

brief space of time have thrown such a fearful interest over our Eastern empire; I called to mind our wild king-making crusade to Affghanistan, its reckless expenditure of treasure, its vast amount of human misery, its last fatal catastrophe. I called to mind the numberless tragic episodes that arose out of that ill-fated expedition; a dynasty overturned at Kelat; the aged chieftain slain in defence of his capital: an usurper seated on the throne by the force of British bayonets; he again driven into exile by an indignant people, and the son of the slaughtered chief resuming his hereditary rights. I called to mind the hardships and sufferings of our gallant and devoted native army, our detachments, surrounded by an overwhelming superiority of numbers, cut up in detail by their fierce and warlike enemies, the disastrous fields of Kujjuk, Surtof, and Nufoosk, where men found a soldier's grave, whose names are unknown to fame, but who yet deserved well of their country.

Sir, it is painful to reflect on the gallant lives thus uselessly sacrificed, on the misery caused to hundreds of English families, and if we have suffered misery, we have inflicted a hundred times greater. That may be a consolation to some, but to me it only conveys deeper shame and sorrow. War, is at all times a great evil, but an unnecessary and unjust war it is fearful to contemplate, *and fearful the responsibility of those who throw their sanction over a crime of such magnitude.*

Sir, no wonder then that my mind turned with some sort of satisfaction to the reflection, that these execrable wars were at an end, that a new era was dawning on Hindostan, and that, profiting by experience, we should direct all our energies to the maintenance of peace, and to the moral and physical advancement of the millions, over whom we are permitted by a gracious Providence to preside. Little did I imagine, that the very next mail would bring accounts of an act of aggression, to which our Indian annals, unhappily so fertile in such acts, can afford no parallel. Little did I imagine that the very man who had denounced the Affghan expedition as a crime, who had gone out of his way to mark his total dissent from the policy of his predecessor, who had so recently put forth to the world that memorable declaration, that, "content with the limits that nature appears to have assigned to its empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general peace." Little did I think that the author of this declaration, without even the plea of an imaginary or real danger to the State, with all the aggravation of ingratitude for services rendered during a season of unwonted trial, would have grasped at frivolous and flimsy pretexts, to goad a barbarous but brave people to desperation, and again to let loose all the horrors and calamities of war.

Sir, it is my conscientious conviction, that if the



thinking part of this great Christian nation, that if the independent portion of the public press, could once be roused to the consideration of this question, such a storm of indignation would burst forth, that no Ministry would be hardy enough to refuse a full and searching enquiry. Sir, the time is past, at all events in this free country, when the follies and passions of an individual can plunge the nation into all the calamities of war. Is it then to be permitted that the servants of the East India company, shall wantonly have recourse to such an extreme arbitrament? Is there to be no end of these wars of aggression? and no voice raised in their condemnation? If the Ministry of this country, oppressed with business, are unable or unwilling to grapple with Indian questions,—if the great council of the kingdom, have neither leisure nor inclination to enter upon an inquiry involving the rights of justice and humanity,—involving the good name and good faith of the British Nation, it is easy to predict, that these acts of tyranny and aggression will continue, that one iniquity will only lead to another, and to use the emphatic words of the unfortunate Ameers of Sind, applied to their own case,—“There will be no justice for the Natives of India, until the Almighty sits on the judgment-seat.”

Sir, I repeat, this is no party movement; it is a step beyond the petty squabbles of political intrigue; it is an appeal to those loftier principles

which alone ought to guide the councils of a great and enlightened Christian Government. Every Englishman shares the responsibility of these acts, and we especially, as the intermediate body between the British public and the Natives of India, bound as we are to that country, by so many ties of friendship and gratitude ;—Sir, are we also to remain silent, and to make no effort to awaken public attention to questions of such overwhelming national importance? Sir, I for one could not reconcile silence to my conscience. I believe it to be the duty of every Member of this Court, to record his opinion against a line of policy that reflects so much discredit on the British name, and entails so much misery upon our fellow-creatures. In this belief I second the motion, and call upon every independent man now present to support it.

THE END.



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